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Activities not classified by field: coordination of development indicators

Harmonization of development indicators

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared at the request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-second session.[a] It describes the work undertaken by the United Nations Statistics Division in support of the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/27 on basic indicators in the context of the follow-up to global conferences. In particular, the report focuses on the statistical implications of the United Nations Millennium Declaration follow-up process. The report briefly describes work undertaken to define indicators to measure the "global partnership for development", and suggests priority work areas for the United Nations Statistics Division for the year 2002/03. The Commission may wish to comment on the proposed work programme and priorities.

[a] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 4* (E/2001/24), chap. I, sect. A.

* E/CN.3/2002/1.

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I. Follow-up activities to Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/27

1. In the past year, the work of the United Nations Statistics Division in the area of statistical indicators has been guided by Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/27 on basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits at all levels. The resolution addresses the following four broad themes: (a) the need for statistical capacity-building; (b) the technical review of existing conference indicators and efforts to define a limited set; (c) the need for so-called "means of implementation" or "global partnership for development" indicators; and (d) the promotion of networking. The Council requested the Secretary-General to report to it on the implementation of the resolution at its substantive session of 2002.

2. The issue of statistical capacity-building will be discussed in detail under agenda item 6 (see also E/CN.3/2002/18 and E/CN.3/2002/19). With respect to the technical review of conference indicators and the efforts to define a limited set, the Division has supported the work of the Friends of the Chair created by the Statistical Commission at its thirty-second session. To ensure country ownership and participation, a special outreach effort was undertaken throughout the period in which the Friends of the Chair actively deliberated in order to keep national statistical offices around the world informed. As a consequence, a large number of national experts was involved in the various thematic subgroups. The final report of the Friends of the Chair is contained in document E/CN.3/2002/26, and contains a number of specific recommendations. Detailed technical descriptions of individual indicators were prepared by the Division, in close cooperation with country experts, and can be found on the Division web page at: http://esa.un.org/unsd/indicatorfoc/.

3. Concerning the indicators of "means of implementation", the underlying concern of the Council was a balanced approach to monitoring conference commitments. Whereas developing countries committed themselves to undertaking the necessary efforts to achieve the international development targets, the industrialized countries committed themselves to provide the necessary enabling environment. The Council stressed the need to further develop such indicators for the global partnership for development in order to measure primarily development assistance, debt relief, foreign direct investment, trade conditions and technology transfer.

4. With the help of a consultant, the Division was able to move forward the work on means of implementation indicators. The objectives of the consultancy was to analyse United Nations conference documents, in particular the preparatory documentation for the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in March 2002 in Mexico, and to describe the most important means of implementation and their corresponding quantitative indicators, identifying availability and vacuums. Also, the quality of available indicators on development assistance, debt relief etc. was to be examined by conducting a technical evaluation. Some recommendations for priority indicators and areas of possible future work were to be included in the final consultancy report, which should be finalized by the time the Statistical Commission meets and will be made available to the Commission as a background document.

5. With respect to the promotion of networking, the Division has conducted an active information campaign, using national, regional and inter-agency forums, to bring Council resolution 2000/27 to the attention of statistical experts and to enlist support for the work of the Friends of the Chair on indicators. At the thirty-fifth session of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities, held in Vienna in September 2001 (see E/CN.3/2002/29), United Nations sister agencies were encouraged to participate with their expertise in the technical evaluation on the Division web site. The Division has also continued its partnership with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and will participate in a review of the common country assessment indicator framework, which is used by the United Nations funds and programmes at the country level for United Nations programming purposes. The purpose of the review is to bring the common country assessment indicator framework into line with the millennium development goals (see sect. II below) and to reflect practical experience gained with the use of the framework over the past two years. The key interest of the Division is to document good practices in the

area of involving national statistical systems in country assessment processes.

II. Indicators to follow-up the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration

6. In its resolution 55/2, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which will determine the agenda for the United Nations in the years to come. The Declaration was signed by 145 heads of state and government. In the field of social and economic development, specific targets were set for key policy areas, such as poverty eradication, which are to be met by the year 2015. Moreover, the General Assembly requested an assessment on a regular basis of progress towards the implementation of goals of the Millennium Declaration.

7. The United Nations Statistics Division, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its capacity as the Chair of UNDG, will cooperate in preparing the quantitative assessments on developmental goals that will be required for the annual reports to the General Assembly. The Division will provide the statistical basis for a review of global process, thereby utilizing global statistical sources and analysis from the United Nations system. UNDG, through its United Nations country team network, will assist countries in preparing national reports on progress towards the goals of the Millennium Declaration.

8. In summer 2001, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General convened an ad hoc expert group meeting, consisting of experts from the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The purpose of the meeting was to harmonize the goals of the Millennium Declaration with the international development targets previously promoted by the OECD Development Assistance Committee, in close cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations system; to consider relevant indicators; and to confirm respective responsibilities at both the global and country levels for monitoring and reporting. The resulting framework of eight goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators — the millennium development goals (see annex) — was included in the report of the Secretary-General on a road map towards the implementation of the Declaration (A/56/362).

9. Most of the indicators of the millennium development goals are currently compiled on a regular basis by the responsible international organizations. The Division is currently reviewing those data for periodicity, consistency and reliability. The Division has also kept the Friends of the Chair abreast of developments, in particular concerning the suggested indicators. Upon review, the Friends of the Chair included most but not all of the indicators in its priority tiers 1 to 3.

10. The benchmark year adopted for trend analysis is 1990. All available data are being included in the Division's common database (http://unstats.un.org), where they are fully accessible to national and international statistical services, Governments and the public. In compiling those data, complete documentation is also being collected by the Division. All the source offices will be asked to comment and make available information on periodicity of series relative to the monitoring and reporting timetable, methodological documentation, available data evaluation studies etc. Partner agencies are asked to make sure that data are based on a reliable and documented national source. An expert meeting, to be convened by the Division in March 2002, is expected to address remaining conceptual, methodological and source questions.

III. Proposed work programme of the United Nations Statistics Division for 2002/03

11. The proposed future work programme of the Division with respect to indicators will centre on the following elements: (a) preparation of the Council report and debate on indicators, including follow-up to a possible Council resolution; (b) follow-up to the recommendations of the Friends of the Chair; (c) continued technical support of the millennium development goals indicator process; (d) focus on statistical capacity-building to support countries in the compilation of key indicators.

12. With respect to the substantive session of 2002 of the Council, the Division will prepare the mandated report on the implementation of Council resolution 2000/27. Key elements of the report to the Council will

be the decisions of the Statistical Commission, in particular with respect to the recommendations of the Friends of the Chair.

13. The recommendations of the Friends of the Chair, insofar as they are endorsed by the Commission, will require an analysis of how to implement them. The Division will prepare a plan, specifying actions, actors and timetables, and will report back to the Commission in 2003 on progress in implementation.

14. The Division will coordinate efforts in the United Nations system to provide a solid database for the analysis of progress towards the millennium development goals. It will facilitate expert dialogue to solve remaining methodological issues. In order to ensure transparency, the millennium development goals database on the Division web site will be updated continuously. In fact, it is proposed that a print publication on basic indicators, which was originally planned for the 2002-2003 programme biennium, be replaced with the electronic dissemination of up-to-date indicator information via the Division web site.

15. Since the discussion of a limited list of key indicators is converging to at least a temporary consensus, attention should shift to common efforts to build the necessary national statistical capacity to actually compile those key indicators. The meta-data web page prepared by the Division, in close cooperation with country experts, will serve as useful technical reference material. As a first step, a thorough analysis of the data gaps and the means needed to close them will be required. The Division is already committed, under its Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) programme, to work with the ASEAN countries over the next year on a common subregional indicator framework. A publication at the end of that project is expected to contain an analysis of steps needed to improve data availability in the subregion for key indicators. The Division will also continue its partnership with UNDG, supporting selected United Nations country assessment exercises and advising UNDG on how the statement of data gaps can lead to renewed efforts of United Nations country teams to strengthen statistical capacity in countries.

IV. Points for discussion

16. The Commission may wish to comment on the proposed work programme of the Division in the field of indicators.

Annex

Millennium development goals*

Goals and targets	*Indicators*
Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	
Target 1. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	1. Proportion of population below $1 per day
	2. Poverty gap ratio (incidence x depth of poverty)
	3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption
Target 2. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	4. Prevalence of underweight children (under five years of age)
	5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education	
Target 3. Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education
	7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5
	8. Literacy rate of 15-24-year-olds
Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women	
Target 4. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015	9. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
	10. Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds
	11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
	12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament
Goal 4. Reduce child mortality	
Target 5. Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	13. Under-five mortality rate
	14. Infant mortality rate
	15. Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles

* Previously issued as A/56/326, annex.

Goals and targets	*Indicators*
Goal 5. Improve maternal health	
Target 6. Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	16. Maternal mortality ratio
	17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	
Target 7. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	18. HIV prevalence among 15-to-24-year-old pregnant women
	19. Contraceptive prevalence rate
	20. Number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS
Target 8. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	21. Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria
	22. Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures
	23. Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis
	24. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course
Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability[a]	
Target 9. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources	25. Proportion of land area covered by forest
	26. Land area protected to maintain biological diversity
	27. GDP per unit of energy use (as proxy for energy efficiency)
	28. Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) [Plus two figures of global atmospheric pollution: ozone depletion and the accumulation of global warming gases]
Target 10. Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water	29. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source

Goals and targets	*Indicators*
Target 11. By 2020 to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers	30. Proportion of people with access to improved sanitation 31. Proportion of people with access to secure tenure [*Urban/rural disaggregation of several of the above indicators may be relevant for monitoring improvement in the lives of slum dwellers*]
Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development[a]	
Target 12. Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction — both nationally and internationally	[*Some of the indicators listed below will be monitored separately for the least developed countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked countries and small island developing States*] **Official development assistance**
Target 13. Address the special needs of the least developed countries Includes: tariff and quota free access for least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPCs and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction	32. Net ODA as percentage of OECD/DAC donors' gross national product (targets of 0.7% in total and 0.15% for LDCs) 33. Proportion of ODA to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation) 34. Proportion of ODA that is untied
Target 14. Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)	35. Proportion of ODA for environment in small island developing States 36. Proportion of ODA for transport sector in landlocked countries
Target 15. Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term	**Market access** 37. Proportion of exports (by value and excluding arms) admitted free of duties and quotas 38. Average tariffs and quotas on agricultural products and textiles and clothing 39. Domestic and export agricultural subsidies in OECD countries 40. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity **Debt sustainability** 41. Proportion of official bilateral HIPC debt cancelled 42. Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services 43. Proportion of ODA provided as debt relief 44. Number of countries reaching HIPC decision and completion points

Goals and targets	*Indicators*
Target 16. In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth	45. Unemployment rate of 15-to-24-year-olds
Target 17. In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries	46.[a] Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis
Target 18. In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications	47. Telephone lines per 1,000 people 48. Personal computers per 1,000 people [Other indicators to be decided]

[a] The selection of indicators for goals 7 and 8 is subject to further refinement.